

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested.

The specification is amended by the present response to correct minor informalities.

The changes made to the specification are deemed to be self-evident from the original disclosure, including the original claims, and thus are not deemed to raise any issues of new matter.

Claims 1-18 are pending in this application. Claims 5-18 are added by the present response. Claims 1-4 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. patent 4,618,150 to Kimura.

Addressing the rejection of Claims 1-4 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as unpatentable over Kimura, that rejection is traversed by the present response.

As recognized in the Office Action, Kimura “fails to explicitly teach a backlight that is set in the front side display unit in order to light up the symbols displayed by the variable display unit”.¹

In response to that recognition of the deficiencies of Kimura in the Office Action, the outstanding rejection is based on a position that:

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to include a backlight in Kimura’s game machine since the examiner takes official notice that backlights are well known in gaming/slot machines to facilitate the viewing of displayed symbols on reels during game play.²

In response to that position, applicants first traverse the Official Notice taken in the Office Action and require that prior art now be cited for the position for which Official Notice is taken.

¹ Office Action of March 9, 2004, page 2, last paragraph.

² Office Action of March 9, 2004, the sentence bridging pages 2 and 3.

Moreover, applicants further traverse the outstanding rejection as it is not believed to be based on any possible suggestion based on teachings in Kimura, or for the position for which Official Notice was taken.

Kimura merely discloses the use of windows 16-18 (which appear to be relied upon to correspond to the claimed “front side display unit”) through which reels 13-15 can be viewed. There would have been no motivation or suggestion to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify Kimura to utilize a backlight located in those windows 16-18. Applicants also note that the outstanding Office Action has not set forth what possible motivation there would be to utilize a backlight in those windows 16-18. Kimura discloses the use of indication lamps 24-26, but does not provide any suggestion or motivation to position those indication lamps in the front windows 16-18 to operate as a backlight, as would be required for Kimura to meet the claim limitations.

Moreover, applicants respectfully submit that there is in fact no possible motivation to one of ordinary skill in the art to even modify Kimura to meet the limitations, even in view of the position for which Official Notice was taken.

In such ways, applicants submit that claims 1-4 define over Kimura.

The present response also sets forth new claims 5-18 for examination, of which new claims 5, 9, and 13 are independent claims. Those new claims are believed to even further distinguish over the applied art to Kimura.

New independent claim 5 is similar to independent claim 1 except that new independent claim 5 further recites that the front side display unit is configured to have “a display portion and to have a portion outside of the display portion to enable viewing of the signals displayed by the variable display unit”. New independent claim 5 now also further clarifies that the backlight lights up “the display portion of the front side display unit and to light up the signals displayed by the variable display unit”.

The above-noted features are believed to be clearly supported by the original specification for example in Figures 36-38, and as discussed in the present specification at page 12, line 10 et seq. As shown in Figures 36-38 and as discussed in the present specification at page 12, line 10 et seq., the front display unit 5 can display objects, for example on the LCD panel 501, and the backlight 2e can light up the display portion of the front side display unit 5 and additionally light the symbols displayed by the variable display unit 3L, 3C, and 3R. The features clarified in new independent claim 5 even further distinguish over the applied art to Kimura which merely discloses the display windows 16-18.

Further, new independent claim 9 is similar to independent claim 1 except that new independent claim 9 further recites that the front side display unit includes “a LCD display”. As noted above, and again with reference to Figure 36 in the present specification as a non-limiting example, the front display unit 5 can include a LCD panel 501. Such a feature even further distinguishes over Kimura which merely discloses the display windows 16-18.

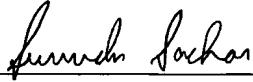
New independent claim 13 is similar to independent claim 1 except that new independent claim 13 further recites that the “front side display unit” is configured to have a “first portion to display a prescribed object and to have a second portion to enable viewing of the symbol displayed on the variable display unit”. Such a feature is believed to further distinguish over the applied art to Kimura, and thus new independent claim 13, and the claims dependent therefrom, are also believed to distinguish over Kimura.

In such ways, new independent claims 5, 9, and 13, and the claims dependent therefrom, even further distinguish over the teachings in Kimura.

As no other issues are pending in this application, it is respectfully submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance, and it is hereby respectfully requested that this case be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

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